

SATURDAY PRESS.

VOLUME III, NUMBER 40.

HONOLULU, H. I., SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 1883.

WHOLE NUMBER 144

SATURDAY PRESS.

A Newspaper Published Weekly.
ISLAND SUBSCRIPTION \$5.00 A YEAR, IN ADVANCE.
Foreign subscriptions
\$6.00 to \$7.00, according to their destination.

FROM AN OLD FRIEND.

Home Again after a Long Absence.

The writer and his fellow passengers sailed from Honolulu in the steamer Suez on the evening of February 17th, too soon to see the coronation home-racing and the regatta, too soon to witness the enchanting performance of the Honolulu dancers, too soon to see the state ball, too soon to present our bows to the friends who were to be the commencement of the "grand illumination." From the steamer's deck could be seen a row of small lights sprinkled along the rim of Punchbowl and a subdued blaze enveloping the towers of Iolani Palace. Occasionally a rocket would shoot into the air, explode, and scatter its burning fragments to the four winds like sparks from the blacksmith's anvil. Now and then a blue light attracted our attention, but we were unable to distinguish the figures represented. As the distance between us and our fair city increased, the lights on the hill appeared like a constellation of small stars on the horizon, in whose midst a tiny meteor would suddenly pop into life, draw one brief breath, then die as quickly as it was born. From our position we were unable to decide whether the display was good, bad or indifferent; but tried to make ourselves think that it was all that the people had been led to expect, for, up to that date certainly, everything else connected with the coronation had proved a delusion.

While our thoughts were thus charitably occupied the steamer had taken a more northerly direction and was standing out into the open sea and suddenly a high ridge seemed to step out from the Kona mountain range and, before we were prepared for it, threw its huge bulk between us and the illumination. That veil, like futurity, no eye could penetrate; and mentally whispering a kind aloha to beautiful Honolulu and the many friends from whom we had just parted, and buttoning our coats a little closer, we tramped the deck, our hearts alternately saddening with thoughts of the recent partings and glowing with the anticipation of friendly greetings beyond. It was a beautiful moonlight evening, and could not have been improved on. The sea was smooth as a landlocked lake, the breeze was balmy and cool, and everything else was in as perfect order as it usually found to be in the opening chapter of a first-class romance. But our little party of five cabin passengers—only one of whom was a lady—soon retired and allowed the pale moon to scatter its beauty undimmed over the waste of waters.

When we awoke the next morning the Suez was plowing her way through a rough head sea with a corkscrew motion—a combination of rolling and pitching that was highly enjoyable. The writer was not sea-sick of course, having been upon the ocean before, but remained in or near his little bunk until a smoother and pleasanter latitude was reached, which was on the third day. All the remainder of the way to the Golden Gate the sea was phenomenally quiet. There was not motion enough to rock a good-natured baby to sleep. It is often rougher on San Francisco bay. This passage in other respects was like the old stereotyped edition—the same monotonous scenery, the same whale alvage, the same birds following the vessel to pick up the garbage, the same clouds in the sky, until we neared the California shore, when the temperature became cool, the atmosphere misty, and finally foggy. I used to dispute the "Frisco fog," but the first one that we encountered I recognized as an old friend. It was the same one that I had left there three years before. The cold wind also proved an agreeable change, and the last night out I remained on deck until midnight to enjoy the supremely pleasurable sensation of being thoroughly chilled once more. The elements appeared to understand my longing and did all that could be done to gratify my desires. The friendly fog treated me as a brother and enveloped my form in its dewy mantle. The breeze, though at first stiff, grew familiar, cooled my cheeks with its icy breath and enticed the rigid tear-drops from my eyes. I became intoxicated with joy when I realized that the last particle of tropical warmth had been expelled from my system. The crimson fluid was half frozen in every artery, vein and capillary, and my heart worked as awkwardly as a village pump in a mid-winter morning; this was happiness enough for one night, and ambling off to my stateroom as gracefully as bebumbled extremities and rigid limbs would permit, I turned in to have my last night's rest on old Neptune's troubled bosom. For several hours the Suez was off the Farallones slowly steaming back and forth in a dense fog. Towards morning it lifted, and when your correspondent went on deck at daylight we were well inside the Golden Gate. The officials who came on board asked many questions concerning the coronation and the by-gone, evidently considering them to be the two principal scourges with which the kingdom was afflicted.

Many important improvements were noticeable as we steamed along the city front, the most noteworthy being new wharves and warehouses, and the sea-wall, which was begun only a short time before I left San Francisco in 1880.

It was just seven o'clock when the steamer drew up alongside the Harrison street wharf and I was privileged to step once more upon the soil of my native California. It has often been said that the Californians are noted for their liberality, and we found it exemplified the moment we passed over the vessel's side. A number of men were standing there with elegant carriages which they had brought to present to the passengers from the islands. I politely refused to accept any of the vehicles, but not satisfied with this they wished me to tell them who would have one. They seemed to think me hard of hearing also, for each one of those twenty-seven or more strong-jawed and liberal hearted phlegmatics roared up and yelled in my ear: "Who wants a hack?" "Who wants a carriage?" I told them repeatedly that I didn't know, and hastened away only to confront another group of men, each one of whom wished to give me a buggy ride, and amidst cries of "Who wants to go to the Palace Hotel?" "This way to the Baldwin?" "Russ House! Russ House!" "Free coach to the American Exchange?" we plunged into the street, my friend, a stranger to San Francisco, keeping in sight of my coat-tails, and they were beckoning him to follow. Finding no one in pursuit we made our way directly into the heart of the city, and the wandering boy went home (to his San Francisco home) to say

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